GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:870
ANSWERED ON:26.02.2009
TRIBES OF NORTH EASTERN REGION
Hussain Shri Anwar

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the culture and languages of many small tribes of North Eastern Region are endangered; and

(b) if so, the efforts made to protect these endangered culture and languages?

Answer

MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE(SMT. AMBIKA SONI)

(a)&(b) Though the extent of endangered linguistic tribal communities in the North Eastern Region has not been surveyed, various Ministries and agencies of the Government are making efforts to protect and preserve the cultural heritage and indigenous languages of the Region.

2. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs operates a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Research and Training under which grants-in-aid is released to Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) for providing planning inputs to the State Governments, conducting research and evaluation studies, collection of data, conducting training, seminars and workshops, documentation of customary laws, setting up of tribal museum for exhibiting tribal artifacts and preservation of tribal culture.

3. Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore under the Ministry of HRD has brought out a number of publications on languages in the North-East and commenced North East Language Development whereby researchers from over 80 speech communities have received some training involving creation of awareness on the issue of language endangerment and language development; and 25-30 research programmes have been actively supported every year.

4. Sahitya Akademi has launched a North Eastern Tribal Oral Literature Centre at North Eastern Hill University, Shillong which has been organizing programmes on the literatures of the North East region and also the collection, editing and translation of the Tribal Oral literature of different languages of the North East.

5. North East Zone Cultural Centre (NEZCC), Dimapur is operating "Guru-Shishya Parampara scheme", which has been beneficial in strengthening and revival of many of the folk arts of the region. Besides this, under the scheme of "documentation of dying and vanishing art forms", the NEZCC has undertaken several documentation projects in the North East. The "Theatre rejuvenation scheme" implemented by the NEZCC has been instrumental in reviving many folk plays and popularizing them in the tribal communities. The Ministry of Culture has also initiated an annual festival of the eight North Eastern States, called "Octave", which has made a positive impact in promoting the culture and art forms of the North East including the smaller tribal communities of the region.